



First United Methodist Church

of

Leavenworth

422 Chestnut, Leavenworth, KS 66048

913-682-5374 FUMCLVKS.ORG

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Office Hours—M-Th 9a-3p, Friday—9a-noon



Or visit us at [FUMCLVKS.ORG](https://www.fumclvks.org)

Sunday services stream at either site.

July 2025

29 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	30	1 9:00 am Prayer Group 1 pm Book Club	2 6:30 pm Choir practice	3	4 Church Office Closed 4th of July Picnic at Kirby's	5 
6 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	7 Youth Mission Trip	8 Youth Mission Trip 9:00 am Prayer Group	9 Youth Mission Trip 5:00 pm Grief Share	10 Youth Mission Trip 8:30am Staff	11 Youth Mission Trip	12
13 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 11 am Fusion 56	14	15 10 am-2 pm Blood Drive 9:00 am Prayer Group	16 12 pm Let's Do Lunch	17 1:30 pm Itchin' to Stitch	18	19 8 am Men's Prayer Breakfast 5 pm Parents @ First BBQ
20 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am VBS Decoration	21 VBS	22 VBS 2 pm Grief Group	23 VBS 5:00 pm Grief Share 5:30 Choir Practice	24 VBS	25 VBS	26 Sister of Charity 
27 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am First Family Fellowship	28	29 9:00 am Prayer Group	30	31	1 Sounds of Summer	2 Sounds or Summer 





When the first Methodists gathered in their small groups called class meetings, one of their standing questions was, "How is it with your soul?" This was back in the 18th and 19th century when the world was incredibly different than today. Some of us are old enough to remember when no stores were open on Sunday. They were called blue laws. The goal was to protect the Sabbath. They were designed to slow people down, so they got together with friends, went for a Sunday drive, or had long, slow Sunday dinners. Seven-Eleven became the first chain store to be open 24 hours/7 days a week. Now, Sunday is just like any other day for entertainment and shopping.

When the iPhone was introduced by Steve Jobs through Apple in 2007, it revolutionized the world. Instead of only losing a day when we opened ourselves to God, now each minute and second of our days competed for our attention. The world was available at the touch of a screen in our pockets. As a result of this and other technology advances, we are distracted, addicted, and losing pace of our lives. We are people out of rhythm with our souls. Stress, irritability, hypersensitivity, emotional numbness, isolation, and out-of-order priorities are felt by many of us on some level. How many of them would you say that you have? Things are not good with our souls. More time is not the answer either. We all get the same amount of time; it is how we use it that matters most.

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus told us "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light". This statement was said long before the invention of the internet, Amazon shopping, or Edison's electric light bulb. Being weary and burdened is part of the human condition. Our era has only intensified and sped up the process.

Our worship themes in July will be focused on ways we can draw closer to God in our noisy and distracted world: Sabbath, Solitude, Silence, and Simplicity. Come, see how you can find a rhythm for your life and rest for your soul!

David J. Swood

BLOOD DRIVE

Tuesday, July 15

10 AM – 2 PM

Book an appointment at savealifenow.org/group

enter group code:EH47

The Kansas City area is down to a 3 day supply of blood so the need for blood donors is critical. Blood can not be manufactured and can save lives.

Type O-negative blood is a universal donor for red blood cells, as it can be given to anyone regardless of their blood type. Type AB-positive blood is a universal donor of plasma, as it can be given to anyone regardless of their blood type. Some blood types, like O-negative and AB, are in short supply because they are less common in the population. Regardless of your blood type, we hope that you will make time to give blood at our blood drive on July 15. You can make an appointment at savealifenow.org/group. Our code is EH47. Walk ins are also accepted. Please give the gift of life.

JULY Birthdays

2nd	Karen Piper	14th	Jeff Eyerly	25th	Rachel Sanders
	George Short		Judy Wolfe		Elizabeth Sanders
9th	Carla Wiegers	18th	Corliss Fox		Tom Tish
10th	Ron Roggentien	22nd	Andy Hall	26th	Joy Defrees
	Rodney Yates	23rd	Rodney Edington	28th	Galen Hooser
13th	Wyatt Brown		Ryan Johnson		Jamie Walley
	Lynn Goss	24th	Gary Russell	31st	Sarah Smith
		25th	Michelle Briggs		



JULY Anniversaries

2nd	David & Lois Kastner	41 years
6th	Steve & Margaret Songer	50 years
12th	Bill & Nancy Shade	38 years
21st	Randy & Linda Herrman	51 years
23rd	LeRoy & Teresa Hicks	47 years
	Dave & Rhonda York	36 years
25th	Wayne & Helen Parks	43 years
29th	Kevin & June Bond	46 years
30th	Tony & Nina McNeill	41 years
	Andi & Tom Pawlowski	30 years

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the office so we can update our records. swood@fumclvks.org



We believe in the power of prayer and so we are asking you to pray for two specific things in July. First, our Vacation Bible School is July 21-25 at 9 am. So, starting July 1 we are asking you to pray for VBS everyday at 9 am. Second, we are asking you to pray for the youth on their mission trip starting on July 1. They will be going to Tulsa, OK, to work in a food pantry and to help people affected by wildfires this year that are still recovering. Your prayers are important. Thank you.

UPCOMING Events

LET'S DO Lunch

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, NOON

METROPOLITAN STEAKHOUSE

1501 METROPOLITAN AVE

MEN'S PRAYER & STUDY

BREAKFAST

JULY 19

8:00 AM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

MIKE MIX HAIRYMULE@GMAIL.COM

OR DAVE LANDIS DLANDIS@HUGHES.NET



From Cell Block to City Hall

Two time Leavenworth Mayor and current City Councilman of Leavenworth, Jermaine Wilson, is featured on the cover of Guidepost June/July edition. He shares his inspiring story of how God found him in a prison cell and transformed his life through Prison Fellowship Ministry. Jermaine is currently a mission ambassador for Prison Fellowship. He travels across the country to speak to churches to encourage them to partner with Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program which helps children whose parents are incarcerated. He will be speaking at our church on August 3.

Jermaine was born in Leavenworth, the youngest of four kids. He idolized his father, but he didn't realize that his father had issues with addiction and had spent time in prison. Jermaine also experienced bullying in school because of his height. Kids called him "Too Short" and he was always picked last for every game. When he was twelve, he and his older brother broke into a house. He was taken to juvenile detention. His mother

was furious with him, but kids at school began to respect him. This desire to be respected and fit in started him on his life of crime. At fifteen, he was sentenced to two years in juvenile detention for robbery. He tried to escape and two years were added to his sentence. He was sent to a facility where he didn't know anyone, so to prove himself, he joined a gang and started to fight. When he was released, he came back to Leavenworth, but by age 20 he was back in prison for selling drugs.

As he sat in his cell, he knew he must do something to change the cycle his family was in. He had an infant son now and he wanted to be a good father to him. He asked the corrections staff if they had a program where he could "become a better man". They suggested Prison Fellowship Academy. This year long program helps inmates explore their personal identity to examine faulty thinking and form new goals. Participants dig deep into who they are, the factors that shaped them, and where they are headed now. There are weekly classes on anger management, goal setting and parenting. It wasn't easy to change, but through conversations with the coaches and being accountable to his other inmates, Jermaine worked through the program.

Prison Fellowship held a revival in his prison and Jermaine attended. He was asked to write a list of everyone he had harmed. He wrote a long list of people he had sold drugs to, his parents, his girlfriend and his son. Then he had to write a list of people who had harmed him. With tears he prayed, "Lord, I need to let go of all of this. I'm turning it over to you". Then he placed the papers in a fire and burned them. When his father visited the next time, he told him about the list. His father had started attending church and was turning his life around; this was the beginning of healing for Jermaine and his father.

In 2010, Jermaine was released from prison. He reconciled with his girlfriend and they started attending Harvest Christian Center International here in Leavenworth. It was difficult for him to find employment because of his record. But he did anything he could to support his family: laundry, cleaning, lawn care. His pastor noticed his work ethic and hired him as the janitor for the church. In 2015, he was able to get his record expunged.

He realized that kids in Leavenworth didn't trust police officers, so he felt God leading him to organize Unity in the Community. Their first event was a barbeque and basketball game where teenagers played against police officers. The energy was so positive that at the end the kids and officers were high fiving.

In 2017, people encouraged him to run for local office, so he ran for City Commissioner. He set up a grill at the Dollar General and offered people free barbeque chicken while he told them his story. In 2019, he was elected to the city commission. The candidate with the most votes becomes the mayor, so he became mayor of Leavenworth. His second day in office he worked with the county prosecutor to waive the fee for criminal record expungement so finances wouldn't be a barrier to other people seeking a second chance.

Jermaine said, "With God, all things are possible. Our past is a place to learn from, not live in. Your story is still being written—and how it ends will depend on the choices you make today. Keep walking in hope. Keep believing in transformation. The best is still ahead."



Parker Edwards is a graphic design student at KCKCC and is doing a summer internship here at the church. We have really appreciated all his work with Vacation Bible School graphics. We are looking forward to seeing how he can help with the website and the newsletter. Parker started coming here with his family when he was much younger. He recently has recommitted to his faith and has started attending on his own.

Parker loves camping and fishing. In June, he and his dad went camping near Mt Rushmore at Horse Thief Lake in South Dakota. They hiked Black Elk Peak which is the highest elevation in South Dakota. Parker was a member of Scout Troop 165 in Lansing. While there he attended both Geiger and Bartle summer camp. He went through the ordeal for the Order of the Arrow and also earned his Eagle Scout.

Parker comes from a family of teachers. His father, Aaron, is the band teacher at Lansing Middle School. His mother, Amy teaches second grade at Ft Leavenworth and his older sister, Taylor, teaches music at the Intermediate school in Leavenworth. Parkers is also musical. He played lead trumpet in the regular and Jazz high school bands.

Parker started drawing cartoons when he was younger. In fact, he even drew super hero comic books. This led to a love of art and an interest in graphic design. He loves to paint and draw with oil pastels. He loves abstract art.

Parker works at the Leavenworth Home Depot in the flooring department, but he will be looking for a new job this fall because he is going to the University of Kansas to study graphic design. He will be living in the KU Campus Christian house. Campus Christians is a non-denominational group of students who share meals, study the Bible and do life together.



Macy Bishops's family was part of our church Family when she was younger and she was part of our children's ministry. Macy will be a senior this next year at Lansing High School. Macy was the "traditional" confirmation age during Covid, so Pastor Dave and Kristen had the privilege to get to do confirmation one-on-one with Macy over the course of the past several months. They walked her through all of the standard confirmation topics; creation, fall, Jesus' life and ministry... once a week at a coffee shop and then let her make the call whether she wanted to be confirmed into our congregation. She decided yes and was confirmed on June 8.

She plays on club and school volleyball teams. She was also the manager for the boys baseball team. She is looking at colleges. She is thinking about attending Baker University. Welcome to the family, Macy.





Wow! My years at the First United Methodist Church of Leavenworth have been filled with excitement and blessings.

It is my great desire that by the time this article is read, our roof project is done, but possibly not. The May-June weather had a tremendous impact on this project, but we continue to persevere. Once the project is completed we have some major landscaping to complete on the west side of the church where torrential rain and poor guttering caused ruts along the foundation, allowing water to enter the building in the basement under the west door stairwell. We have identified and will rectify the problem shortly. Thank you for your continuous prayers and support in this endeavor.

The descendants of His servants will inherit it, and those who love His name will dwell in it. Psalm 69:36

Financially, the church is in good position to meet our forecasted obligations and commitments. Thanks to your giving we constantly strive to maintain a first class facility, stewarded by a Christ focused staff.

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

August 10 is the Communion Sunday where we go back to two morning services. Additionally, more exciting news is on August 9 -10, we will host a prayer vigil and service for our schools. We will start praying at 8 pm, Saturday, August 9, and continue until 8 pm August 10. Please consider signing up for a time slot of pray. You can pray from anywhere and from inside the church August 10 from 8am – 8pm. From 6pm-8pm, we will be joined by our United as One churches for praise, prayer and worship!

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35

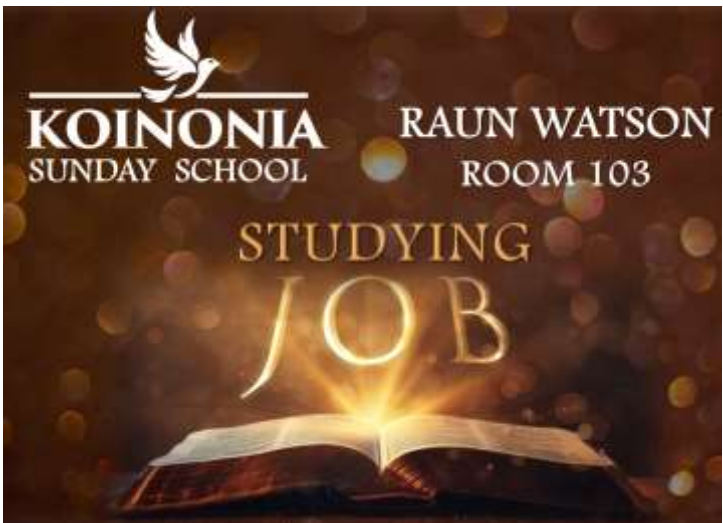
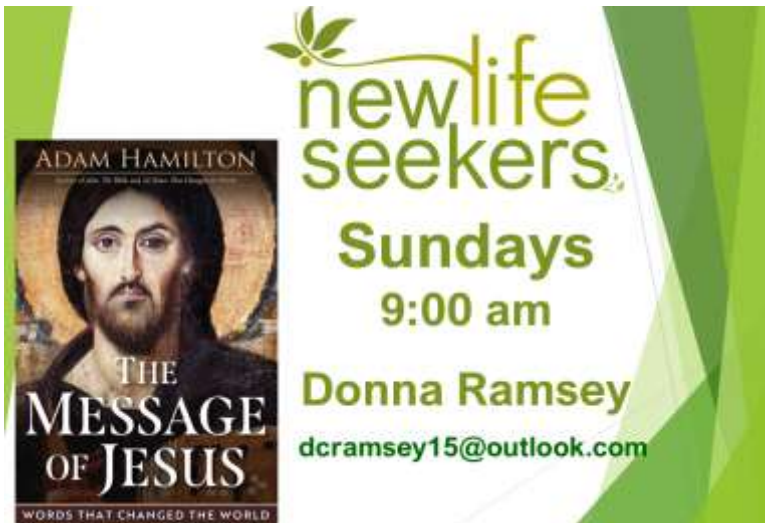
The blessings I have received have been in the friendships I have made with my brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus and with the mission partners I have met in the community. The Lord has commanded us to use our time, treasure, and talents to bring Kingdom to our homes, our church, and our community. I ask that each of you pray on how you can bring Kingdom in your own way. We have many opportunities for serving on a weekly or monthly basis through the generosity and compassion of this church.

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord. He will reward them for what they have done. Proverbs 19:17

Starting in August, for the first two weeks, we will host the Leavenworth Guidance Center Summer Camp for kids, in our Education Building Monday through Friday mornings for their cooperative classes. Increasing the use of our physical assets will be vital for continuity of learning and community outreach during these cooperative times.

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8

In Christ Jesus, love gives life to Kingdom building! Ed, 816-805-4771(my cell)



Two Sunday School classes are starting new studies on July 6. The New Life Seekers will start The Message of Jesus by Adam Hamilton. The Koinonia class will be starting an in depth study of the book of Job. All Sunday School classes start at 9 am this summer and are welcoming new members. There are classes for all ages.



Not so Good - Good - Better - Best

June 15-21, Scouts were at camp. They had 22 folks there; the older scouts were helping the young scouts learn and reinforce basic skills. This is a great opportunity to earn at least five merit badges. A bit of nostalgia for me, (Bill Kidder) but I enjoyed archery and marksmanship so much, I took it every year! They discourage that. So far, two Scouts have already completed all advancement requirements for their next rank.

Camp Hohn, officially known as the Lake of the Ozarks Scout Reservation, is a premier Boy Scouts of America camp located in Gravois Mills, Missouri. Nestled along 1.5 miles of shoreline on the Lake of the Ozarks, it spans 450 acres of rugged terrain and natural beauty. But I am here to tell you, it is up hill, both ways!

The camp offers a wide range of programs including:

- Scouts BSA Summer Camp, with over 80 merit badges and activities.
- Project C.O.P.E. (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience).
- Climbing and Sailing programs.
- The Sinquefeld Invention Campus, featuring blacksmithing, welding, woodworking, and an iLab.

It's a patrol-method cooking camp, meaning units prepare their own meals with food provided by the camp commissary.

But wait, there is MORE: The older scouts will participate in a high adventure experience in July.



Cole Hubbard is Joel and Lyndsay Hubbard's son and Kathy Huskey's grandson. Cole was recently named the Leavenworth Athlete of the Year. Cole competes in Cross County during the fall and Track & Field during the spring. As a sophomore last year, he set the Basehor-Linwood High School cross country record at 16:27 in the 5-kilometer race. During the spring he set the BLHS steeple chase record at 6:51 for the 2-kilometer race with hurdles and a water pit. Also, during his sophomore track season he set personal best times of 4:34 in the 1600 meter (mile) which is 2 seconds off the school record, and 10:06 in the 3200 meter (2 mile) which is 1 second off the school record. His dedication to running and hard work should allow him to easily break those records as a junior and he should reset the cross country and steeple chase records as well.

Besides his athletic abilities, he's an A student. His coaches recognized him as a freshman for being respectful to the coaches and helpful to teammates. Cole said, "I really started to get into it in my 8th grade cross country season because of how fun it was to run with my friends. Now I focus and running has become my favorite thing to do, and I'm hoping to keep running all my life."



Itchin' to Stitch

Carlos Vasquez is a sixth grader in our church family who has been fighting cancer. For months he has been going to radiation treatments. The Itchin' to Stitch ladies made a Chiefs quilt for Carlos and his brother, Sam, to remind them they are covered with prayer during this difficult time. Carlos completed his last round of radiation treatment on June 6th. He is slowly regaining his energy and appetite. Overall, everything is trending positively.

The Itchin' to Stitch ladies have also been busy making baby quilts as we have had lots of new babies in the church lately. The Peoples family received their baby quilt for Payton, on their last day with our church family. They are a military family and are headed for their new duty station in Colorado Springs.

If you love to sew and would like to use your skills to help people in our community, you can contact Teresa Hicks at hickst@kc.rr.com. They work on projects at home, but they meet on the third Thursday of each month at 1:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.



The Caring Congregation



One of the reasons I like attending church during the summer is because we switch to one service. This gives me a chance to see and meet people from the 11 am service that, as an attendee of the 8:30 am service, I don't normally run into. Many of them are younger families with children. Since my own children are long gone, it's great to be exposed to the energy and vitality that they bring. It occurred to me that perhaps many of these younger families don't know about some of the in-house ministries our church offers. So, I'd like to talk about the Nurture Committee, of which I'm a member. I'm a firm believer that it's difficult for anyone to reach out and help others if they are themselves hurting. Here are a few of the many areas where we try to foster a healthy congregation.

Congregational Care - We try to keep a finger on the pulse of the congregation. We visit, either in person or via telephone, sometimes providing partners to people experiencing loss or challenging times. Sometimes, just getting a home cooked meal can help a family through a tough stretch. Or, perhaps a card to let them know they aren't forgotten makes all the difference.

Grief Share - This support group is for people experiencing grief or loss. We currently have three groups: one for loss of a spouse, one for loss of any loved one (parent, child, friend, etc) and virtual for anyone who is unable to attend in person.

Angel ministry - Anyone who has reached 80 years old is partnered with an "angel" who checks in on them periodically. Lasting friendships are formed and social bonds are created which allows the octogenarians a chance to feel connected to the church, especially as they become less mobile and more homebound.

Samaritan's Buffet meal delivery - Volunteers take meals to the homebound, shut in, or church members who are ill and experiencing temporary setbacks.

Itchin' to Stitch - These talented seamstresses provide prayer shawls, baby quilts, and veterans quilts, as well as quilts and other handmade items to hospitals, dialysis units, and families in need.

Funeral support - After the funeral of a loved one, we provide a meal for the family and their guests. This allows them to have a space where they can congregate, eat, and share memories of their loved one. It's especially important because families travel long distances to be here and they have a place to connect with one another.

Hospital, nursing facilities, and home visits - When Pastor Dave is unavailable, Congregation Care volunteers step in to provide contact with families or individuals who are ill or in care facilities.

Serve Saturday - Whether it's raking leaves, doing simple repairs, or changing fire alarm batteries, volunteers assist church members who are no longer able to perform simple tasks.

Parenting and Young Adults group - Last month, Kristen launched a group where parents can connect with one another to socialize, exchange wisdom, and learn techniques of good parenting. Young adults connect with each other to form friendships while having fun and socializing.

Classes and seminars - Last year, we offered information seminars on end of life, care facilities and costs, elder abuse, wills and trusts, planning your funeral, dementia, and mental illness to name a few. These were led by local professionals and were free to the public. They were well attended and well received.

So, what do these things have in common? Every one of them cannot function without **VOLUNTEERS!** That's where we really need younger families to infuse some life and vitality. I'm always looking for people with the gift of friendship who might be available for an hour or two. There is a huge need for people who enjoy cooking when a meal is needed. If you feel called by this article, just let me or the church office know. Don't hide your light under a bushel, you are needed just as you are. And many thanks to those who are already selflessly serving. You know who you are. It really does take a village. *Shalom, Marsha*

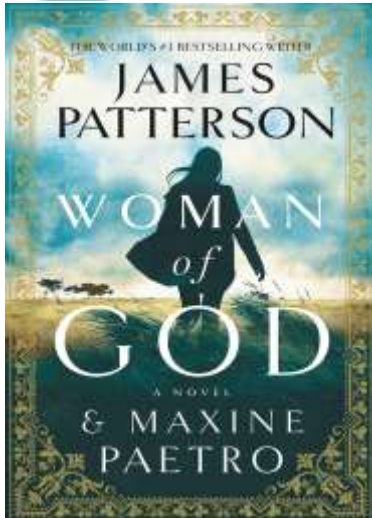
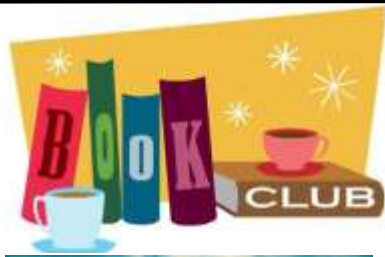
August 5, 1 pm

Summer is a great time to read a book. The Book Club is reading *Woman of God* by James Patterson and Maxine Paetro. We will discuss the book August 5 at 1 pm.

The world is watching as massive crowds gather in Rome, waiting for news of a new pope, one who promises to be unlike any other in history. It's a turning point that may change the Church forever. Some followers are ecstatic that the movement reinvigorating the Church is about to reach the Vatican, but the leading candidate has made a legion of powerful enemies who aren't afraid to kill for their cause.

From a difficult childhood with drug addled parents, to a career as a doctor on the front lines in Sudan, to a series of trials that test her faith at every turn, Brigid Fitzgerald's convictions and callings have made her the target of all those who fear that the Church has lost its way - dangerous adversaries who abhor challenges to tradition. Locked in a deadly, high-stakes battle with forces determined to undermine everything she believes in, Brigid must convert her enemies to her cause before she loses her faith or her life.

From a civil war in Sudan to the drug dens and law firms of Boston, *Woman of God* spans the globe with a thrilling tale of perseverance, love, trust and what it means to live in a fallen world



Dear Congregation of First United Methodist Church,
The Richard Allen Cultural Center and Museum thanks you
for your donation.
John Hutchinson,
Executive Director

Dear Church,
We appreciate the giftcard for the celebration of our
graduation and for the great breakfast, too. Thank you
very much.
Kaelyn & Madison Mohan

Dear United Methodist Church,
Thank you so much for supporting Nite at the Races.
We could not do what we do without support like
yours.
Again, Many Thanks,
CASA Staff & Board of Directors

Dear First United Methodist Church,
Thank you for sending the newsletter the last couple
of years. I have enjoyed seeing what people are
involved in. Thanks.
Lorene Richardson

School Supplies Drive

We are partnering with Faith Walkers
to help 300 kids from our community
get ready to go back to school.

Please bring donations by July 27.

Backpack (no wheels)
Notebook, Wide Ruled
Filler Paper, Wide Ruled
Pocket Folders
Headphones
Pencil Bag/Pouch
Pencils
Colored Pencils
Washable Markers
Dry Erase Markers
Highlighters
Glue Sticks

Fiskars Scissors
Quart Slider Storage Bags
Gallon Slider Storage Bags
Germ-X Hand Sanitizer
Disinfecting Wipes
Large, Pink Eraser
Post-it® Notes
Facial Tissues
Crayons, 24 Count
Index Cards
Child Scissors
Elmer's Glue



iReach's dedication to serve families in need set them on a mission to adopt a local, low-income neighborhood in Leavenworth - Woodland Village. God presented Pastor Orlando and his team with the opportunity to host Friday night pop ups, called Summer Daze. The impact quite literally changed the lives of everyone involved. The simplicity of love and consistency restored friendships, met dire family needs, and provided food to hungry bellies. They even partnered with the local workforce center to provide employment. iReach is participating in changing the mindsets of Woodland residents from cast down to triumphant! We firmly believe - and now have the proof - that no one goes without when we all become the village... and reach!

iReach kicked off last summer with a "Sound of Summer" event, a neighborhood outreach block party that brought community resources to the people who need them - consisting of job applications, transportation information, childcare options, housing connections, food pantry hours, on-site haircuts, and backpacks and school supplies. They continued their interactions with the families at Woodland Village by having a Faith Giving event that gave away Thanksgiving meal supplies and clothes. They also did a Christmas event, and in the Spring, they hosted a Community Baby Shower that gave expectant mothers baby clothes and hygiene items.

This year on August 1 & 2, we are going to partner with iReach to provide backpacks and school supplies for the kids at Woodland Village. The event will feature school enrollment opportunities, haircuts, barbeque, live music and a water balloon fight. We have a list from the school district of needed supplies that we will be collecting. The average cost for school supplies for an elementary school child is \$120. That does not include enrollment fees, or back to school clothes or all the other costs associated with going back to school. Imagine having multiple children on a low income trying to afford those supplies. If you would like to contribute, please bring your school supplies to the church office by July 27.

Orlando Rivera grew up in Leavenworth and has a heart for reaching the least of these in our community. In 2021 Pastor Orlando started his ministry working with college students at St. Mary's University and Highland Community College in Atchison. He now leads ministries at 9 colleges. Faith Walker Outreach recently moved to 2021 Metropolitan Ave.

Working in ministry, Pastor Orlando observed that many families were broken leaving children unsupported and hurting. Pastor O wanted to making a lasting impact on families so he started iReach. The purpose of iReach is determined to bring the family structure back to our community, providing it with necessary resources to support and sustain it for future success.

FIRST UMC
Refuge Youth
LEAVENWORTH



Kristen Howell, Director of Young People



Our youth group is on summer break along with our students, but that doesn't mean we aren't busy! In May, we celebrated the end of the school year by taking a day trip out to Worlds of Fun. The weather was gorgeous! It was a perfect day to be outside. Everyone had a blast and we closed out the park.

Different groups went on different rides, but the Patriot was a repeated favorite of most everyone. It was a great opportunity to make friends, as we had a couple of newer students join us. In June, we will be doing a service project at the church and then go to Sky Zone in the afternoon. In July, we will have our annual youth mission trip, this year to Tulsa, Oklahoma. We will be helping with a food pantry and outreach ministry for people in the area that have seen wildfires this year and are still recovering from the ground up. In August, we kick off the school year with our annual lock-in and Refuge youth group will be back before we know it!

Sunday school runs all year round. Right now, we meet 9-9:45 in the youth room on Sunday mornings. We are working our way through Exodus, my favorite narrative book of the Old Testament. *Kristen Howell*

Young Adults continues to meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 5-7pm at the church. We share a meal and fellowship together (and often board games!). It's a great way to meet others in similar stages of life if you are between 18 and 35 years old. In July we will meet on July 2 and 16.



Parents @ First
JULY 19, 5 PM
MOORE'S HOUSE
CONTACT KRISTEN FOR DIRECTIONS
KHOWELL@FUMCLVKS.ORG



Parents @ First had our inaugural meeting June 7. We met for donuts and coffee and discussed what we want from the group going forward. We'll continue to meet once per month, generally on Saturday afternoons, for fellowship and to support one another through the adventure of parenting. Our next meeting will be July 19 at 5 pm for a cookout at the Moore's home. We will supply the meat, but please bring a side or dessert. Please bring your kids. There is a large yard for kids to play in. Contact Kristen Howell khowell@fumclvks.org to get direction! We'd love to have all families with kids join us!

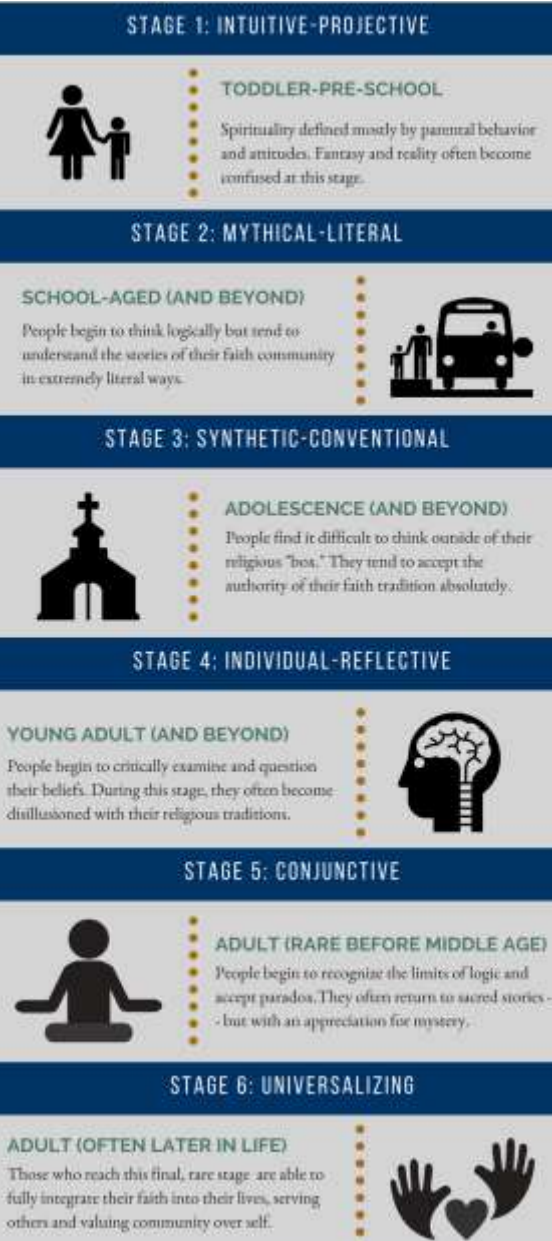
GROWING IN FAITH BY KRISTEN HOWELL

In May, I shared a sermon on doubt and how it can help us to move forward in our faith. One of the tricks in writing sermons is that there's never enough time to cover everything I want to and a lot of things end up on the cutting room floor. Which is why it's so convenient to have a newsletter! One of the things I left out was a discussion about Fowler's Stages of Spiritual Development. The theory was created by a man named James Fowler in his 1981 book, *Stages of Faith* and has become the gold standard of understanding the nuts and bolts of spiritual growth and development. His book is covered in seminaries across the globe and is embraced by many different denominations.

In Fowler's theory, there are 6 stages of human spiritual development: Stage 1, called Intuitive-Projective, spans from about 3 to 7 and mixes reality and fantasy together. In this stage, beliefs often come directly from our parents or society. Stage 2 is Mythic-Literal, typically spanning ages 7-12 where logical thinking emerges. Stage 2 still accepts the stories told by their faith community and comprehends them literally. Stage 3 is Synthetic-Conventional. The kids in my youth group are generally transitioning from Stage 2 into 3 when they enter the youth group and will spend the majority of their time in Stage 3 while they are with me. Stage 3 begins with the ability to think abstractly, making it so we are able to think about less-tangible ideas like love, hate, devotion, and faith among many, many others. Stage 3 serves as a way to understand and harmonize experiences in different social circles and settings, and people often get their values and beliefs directly from their faith tradition. This is good because our churches and religious circles are our homes – for many, they are who raised us. This gives us a sense of belonging and safety. However, I said that there are 6 stages and we are only on stage 3. What happens when Stage 4 comes into play?

Stage 4 can be really scary, especially in faith traditions that will only tolerate uniformity. As a result, many people stop developing at Stage 3. Stage 4, called Individual-Reflective, requires that we see outside of our own boxes and recognize that there are other “boxes.” People in this stage begin to notice that there are many different denominations within Christianity alone and the statistical probability of their one denomination having a monopoly on truth is low. People here may begin to admire things in other faiths or Christian traditions experiencing what has been deemed “holy envy.” For me, I wish I could be as centered around prayer as the Muslims or as ready to debate theology as the Jews (just kidding - I'm open to debating, but it's not always socially appropriate). I may keep my own tradition, but I may embrace ideas that I value in other traditions, as well. People who stop here often end up in the “nones” or the “spiritual-but-not-religious” categories we see growing on all the polls, or they are forced to move into Stages 5 and 6. Stage 5 typically doesn't hit until mid-life, if at all, and Stage 6 is incredibly rare. Most people will not reach it. Stage 5 is the place at which people begin to embrace paradox and understand the limits of logic. A person in Stage 5 or 6 often seem at home with themselves and are open to the mystery of faith. In this stage, emphasis is on community more-so than individuality. Stage 6 is Universalizing Faith, which is the complete integration of belief and life culminating in service to others.

If we don't feel safe to question or even reject the beliefs we had in Stages 1-3, we'll never be able to embrace the peace that comes from knowing what one believes and why. Asking big questions of God is not backsliding, so much as it is the next step of coming into our own. For me, moving into Stage 4 faith required more faith than I'd ever known because I had to relinquish my need to feel in control of everything. It made a way for so much growth in my own life and faith. I highly encourage you to check out Fowler's book if you're interested in learning more about spiritual development. It's a great tool for learning where you are, as well as where your kids or people you work are so that you can encourage them, as well.



A little over 7 years ago, we were blessed with a beautiful blue-eyed grandson. We had no idea what kind of a blessing he would be - none of us do when we have grandchildren. But this child is a blessing like no other. Nancy and Bill Shade have a grandchild almost the same age, so it was natural to “compare notes” with Nancy about how quickly our little ones were growing. But I was concerned when Valancy started talking and Oliver wasn't; something was different. Within the year, Ollie was diagnosed as being severely autistic.

When I was asked if I'd write an article about being the grandmother of an autistic kid, I had no idea what to write. Ollie has been in ABA Therapy since he was about 3 years old. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy is a behavioral intervention used to improve a person's social, communication, and learning skills, especially for individuals with autism. The state requires children to be in school by the age of 7 so he started school in March of this year. The professionals at his school say his learning maturity level is at about a 3 year-old.

Ollie loves to run but he may never learn to ride a bike. He loves fried chicken but he may never learn to cook. He is obsessed with one specific cartoon but he may never have artistic talent like his daddy, grandmother, and great-grandfather. Ollie loves to take trips and watches everything but may never learn to drive. And yet, Ollie is the most lovable child I've known. He's extremely devoted to his daddy and if I am the one who picks him up from school or therapy, he repeatedly reminds himself that “It's Okay”. Daddy's okay.

Being on the autism spectrum is a terminology that has so many meanings. It's like saying you're from the Midwest but we all know that being from Kansas is a lot different than being from Minnesota. It's even different being from Leavenworth compared to Kansas City! One thing we can all agree on is that everyone on the “spectrum” needs our love, care, and kindness. My new sticker going on my car says “Autism doesn't come with a manual. It comes with a family that never gives up.” That sentiment echoes life in general. Life doesn't come with a manual but it does come with a God that never gives up! *Libby Frasier*

Southern Heights Methodist Church
Kids Camp Yard Sale
August 2

Southern Heights is accepting donations for their yard sale to send kids to camp.

Take donations to Southern Heights
726 Muncie Rd
913-682-4996

Celebration of Life for Jef Peckham
July 12
2 pm

We will finally be able to honor our friend, Jef Peckham on July 12 at 2 pm. His family will be joining us and the choir will be singing. There will be a small gathering after the service. If you would like to help with the gathering, contact Kathy McKinley at kmckinley@fumclvks.org.



Kids First Worship is for kids ages 3 years through 4th grade. During July we will be meeting during the 10 am service each Sunday on the lower floor of the Sanctuary building. We will be continuing our Road Trip through the Fruit of the Spirit.

July 6: Goodness
July 13: Faith
July 20: Gentleness
July 27: Self-Control



Sunday School is for kids ages 3 years through 6th grade and meets at 9 am in room 202 of the Education building. We will be studying the same lessons as Kids First Worship, taking time to go a little deeper.



Fusion 56 (our special group for 5th and 6th graders), will be getting together for some fun activities this summer.

Our next event will be July 13

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

DAY 1 Noah and the Ark

Donation: Canned tuna

When you Obey....God Comes to the Rescue!

Bible Verse: If we have to choose between obedience to God and obedience to any other human authority, then we must obey God. Acts 5:29

DAY 2 Baby Moses in a Basket

Donation: Pasta & Spaghetti Sauce

When you Trust...God Comes to the Rescue!

Bible Verse: He's the Rock and his work is perfect, everything he does is right. He's the God who can be trusted.

Deuteronomy 32:4

DAY 3 Jesus Calms the Storm

Donation: Peanut Butter and Jelly

When Storms Come...God Comes to the Rescue!

Bible Verse: When you face stormy seas, I will be there with you with endurance and calm. Isaiah 43:2

DAY 4 Peter Walks on Water

Donation: Cereal

When you Doubt...God Comes to the Rescue!

Bible Verse: Don't be shy, don't be doubtful; lift up your eyes and look around. Isaiah 60:4

DAY 5 Paul is Shipwrecked

Donation: Canned Fruit

When you are Scared...God Comes to the Rescue!

Bible Verse: And He will be leading you. He'll be with you and He'll never fail you or abandon you. So don't be afraid!

Deuteronomy 31:8

We will need LOTS of volunteers to be crew leaders for VBS. To register as a volunteer or a participant, go to our website fumclvks.org/vbs. For more info on Children's ministry, contact Nancy Shade at nshade@fumclvks.org.



The 2nd amendment concerned adding the words "gender" and "ability" to the statement in the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 4) so that it would say "the UMC acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status or economic condition shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection". The 3rd amendment concerned Racial Justice and committing to anti-racism. It would change the language in the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 5) to reflect "an explicit acknowledgment of racism, show commitment to activism toward anti-racism, admit the historical context of racism, and would emphasize unity and healing while also pushing for moral leadership on the topic". The 4th amendment concerned Clergy Elections and would change the language in the Book of Discipline (Paragraph 35, Article IV) "regarding educational requirements for eligibility to vote for clergy delegates to General Conference". This would allow for clergy with varying educational requirements, as per their geographical conferences, to be able to be involved as representatives to conferences. The results of the voting to ratify these 4 amendments will be announced later this Fall after all the votes from all of the annual conferences have been collected, reported to the General Conference Secretary, and tabulated.

For the business section of GPAC, we passed 17 resolutions. 1) Medicaid Expansion in Kansas - this resolution states that the Great Plains Conference (GPC) supports Medicaid Expansion in Kansas. 2) Christian Nationalism - this resolution states that the GPC rejects the tenets of Christian Nationalism and affirms the gospel of love in Colossians 3:12-14. 3) Great Plains Conference Parental Leave Policy—this resolution updates the parental leave policy for the GPC. 4) Establishing a Caretaker of God's Creation Coordinator - this resolution creates a new position in the GPC as instructed by the 2024 General Conference. The Caretaker of God's Creation Coordinator will "assist churches with resources and mentors...so that creation care and justice will be lifted up in all areas of ministry and mission". 5) Transition to Clean Energy - this resolution commits the GPC to affirm and live by the General Conference's position on climate change and energy policy so that churches in the conference can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and transition to clean energy. 6) Affirming World Methodist Council (WMC) and World Council of Churches (WCC) call to end the genocide in Palestine - this resolution states that the GPC supports the position to denounce the violence and call for a ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian assistance. It supports a just and sustainable peace for all in the Holy Land. 7-17) Resolutions for the closing of 11 churches.

Some quotable quotes from the conference included:

"Justice is about what I want for me and my family, I also want for you and your family."

"Space Church: Forget the world, let's make the universe our parish."

"Sankofa means go back and fetch it and carry it forward."

"O, may you also be vile, exceedingly vile, for (God's) sake! God forbid that you should ever be other than generally scandalous." -John Wesley 1739.

"The greatness of our table is not determined by who we left out, but by who we invite."

The last quote was autocorrected on my phone notes to say "The great mess of our table is not determined by who we left out but by who we invite." I think it works either way!

For these stories and more, feel free to stop and chat with me. See you in the pew. - Michelle Briggs, Lay Leader ammkm@yahoo.com (913) 485-5375. All quotes taken from material provided by the Great Plains Conference for the purposes of the Great Plains Annual Conference - GPAC 2025 Workbook or heard at Great Plains Annual Conference 2025. For more information visit the Great Plains website and view the Annual Conference page at greatplainsumc.org/annualconference





Annual Conference LAY LEADER REPORT

It's time once again for the Great Plains Annual Conference and conference report! I attended that conference on June 5-7, 2025, in Salina, Kansas on the Kansas Wesleyan University campus. Kansas Wesleyan University is one of 5 United Methodist Universities in the Great Plains Conference. As a reminder, the United Methodist Church (UMC) is a connectional church, meaning that all UMC churches are connected in an organizational system that seeks to unify and strengthen the church and its ministries. Think of the United Methodist organization being structured like home, cities, counties, states, regions, and countries. Our Leavenworth 1st UMC is our home which is located in the Northeast Kansas District, which is part of the Great Plains Conference, which in turn is part of the South Central Jurisdictional Conference of the United States, and which is then part of the General Conference (the whole global UMC). The Great Plains Annual Conference (GPAC) is the business meeting of all the local UMC churches in Kansas and Nebraska. The conference attendees include clergy and laity (non-clergy) from those local churches, as well as clergy and laity from the district levels and the conference level. The conference includes worship services, a business session, workshops, speakers, and special services, including a commemoration service, retiree recognition, baptism, and an ordination and appointment setting service.

The theme for GPAC 2025 was Loving God. I focused my attention on looking for a little Jesus because, as many of you know, everybody needs a little Jesus! I was going to bring my 1 inch Jesus to Annual Conference but left him at home by mistake. I needn't have worried though, because I found a little Jesus on the first conference booth table. I carried a little Jesus in my pocket the rest of conference and took several pictures with him. I also met some of my Methodist family and friends that I didn't previously know. There are good people all over the states of Kansas and Nebraska.

At GPAC, we were introduced to the UMC's new vision statement from the Council of Bishops: "The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections." The shortened version is "Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously". I like the new vision statement as it speaks to me of the 3 parts of our triune God. Loving boldly as God does, serving joyfully as Jesus did, and leading courageously with the Holy Spirit.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Rev. Dr. Ashley Boggan, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History. She gave a presentation focusing on the future of Methodism in this time and place as it relates to the past of Methodism and John Wesley (the founder of Methodism). Wesley struggled with similar issues that we have today - how to take the church and the gospel to the people. One of John Wesley's beliefs was that the mark of a Christian should be joy, which was a radical approach in the 1700's in England. He found his joy in the Lord through service to others and serving among the people – truths that we as United Methodists still hold. She also talked about social justice and that that has been a part of our fabric as United Methodists from the beginning. This year at Annual Conference, we voted on 4 amendments to the UMC constitution that had been passed by the General Conference (the global meeting of the UMC) last year. In the structure of the UMC, every vote from every annual conference is counted and the amendment must pass by a 2/3 majority of affirmative (yes) votes of all those votes cast from all conferences in order to be ratified. The 1st amendment concerned Regionalization, the establishment of Regional Conferences, all geographic in nature and all equal.



The Kirby's house is 20 miles from the church. Take Highway 7 North. Turn left at Thomas Rd and follow the curve. Take a left at Rawlins Rd and follow it to 206th Rd. Finally take a right on Pawnee Rd. If you put this in Google Maps, use Dusty Roads Entertainment to get the right address.



Your whole family is invited to Thom and Jaimie Kirby's house to celebrate the Fourth of July. They will be having a come and go event from noon until 6 pm, so you will have plenty of time to go see your favorite fireworks show afterwards. They will have a bounce house, swimming, a pie eating contest and a corn hole contest. It's going to be a fantastic time for everyone!

The church is supplying hamburgers and hotdogs. Please bring a side dish &/or a dessert to share. Please sign up in the foyer so we know how much food to prepare.

The Leader of the Band Keeps on Marching

Dale Roller, a legendary music teacher/marching band leader, sat down with me on his 90th birthday. Dale and his wife, Berneice, raised their family in this church. There are photos from the church directories spanning the decades to the left.

Originally from Holton, KS, Dale received his masters at Northern Colorado University. He taught music and band spanning four decades before retiring in 1997. He taught in Oswego and Norton, KS, before landing in Leavenworth. While here he taught at numerous schools and took the Leavenworth High School Marching Band to two Rose Bowl Parades, two Cotton Bowl parades and one Orange Bowl Parade.

His uncle, Clarence Sawhill, was the director of the UCLA Bruins marching band in their heyday of the 1960s-1970s. Dale shared stories of cross county car rides launching from Kansas to California and to the east coast. He has fond memories of walking along the Atlantic City boardwalk with his wife. The day we talked, Dale was waiting for his son, Tim, to arrive so they could launch another Roller adventure to celebrate his birthday. Happy birthday brother and keep on marching along.

Ed Garven

Fathers Day at FUMC

Father's Day weekend was a busy time in Leavenworth. The Sweet Exchange Bake Sale raised almost \$47,000. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped bake. Juneteenth held its annual parade and festival at Haymarket Square. We celebrated father's and their kids. Enjoy these photos of proud papas and their children.

